



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Bicycle and Helmet Safety



With fitness on everybody's mind these days, more people are turning to bicycling as a way to get into or stay in shape. It is a popular fitness activity for health-conscious adults and provides an alternative means of commuting for the environmentally conscious.

With millions of cyclists on the roads - the same roads occupied by millions of motor vehicles that are larger, heavier and faster than bikes - defensive driving applies to both cyclists and drivers.

Each year, 900 bicyclists are killed and 600,000 suffer disabling injuries. Obviously, taking precautions in traffic and wearing protective equipment are a cyclist's best defense against unintentional injuries. For this reason, a helmet is essential, and a certified helmet can greatly reduce your chance of head injury.

Tips for safe biking

- Wear a helmet. Head injuries cause about 75 percent of all bicycling fatalities. The first body part to fly forward in a collision is usually the head, and with nothing but skin and bone to protect the brain from injury, the results can be tragic. Look for helmets with Snell Memorial Foundation or American National Standards Institute approval stickers.
- Obey traffic rules. Cyclists must follow the same rules as motorists.
- Know your bike's capabilities.
- Go with the flow. Ride in single file with traffic, not against it. Bicycling two abreast can be dangerous. Bicyclists should stay as far right on the pavement as possible, watching for opening car doors, sewer gratings, soft shoulders, broken glass and other debris. Remember to keep a safe distance from the vehicle ahead.
- Stay alert. Always look in all directions before riding into traffic.
- Always be seen. During the day, cyclists should wear bright clothing. If riding at night is necessary, retro-reflective clothing designed to reflect motorists' headlight beams will make cyclists more visible.
- Make sure your bicycle has the right safety equipment: a red rear reflector; a white front reflector; a red or colorless spoke reflector on the rear wheel; an amber or colorless reflector on the front wheel; pedal reflectors; a horn or bell; and a rearview mirror. A bright headlight is recommended for night riding.

SIDEBAR:

- Make sure your helmet fits your head.
 - Try the helmet on before you buy it.
 - Adjust the chin strap firmly but comfortably.
 - Try another helmet size or design if simple hand pressure shifts or tilts a helmet significantly or forces it off your head.
- Wear your helmet correctly.
 - Wear it every time you ride a bicycle.
 - Wear it low on your forehead just above your eyebrows.
 - Always fasten the chin strap firmly.
- Read and follow all directions carefully.
 - Use only manufacturer-approved decorations and cleaners.
 - Replace your helmet if it has been damaged.
 - Replace your helmet at least every 5 years.